

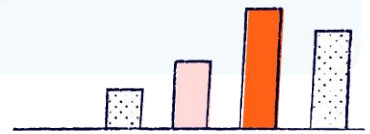
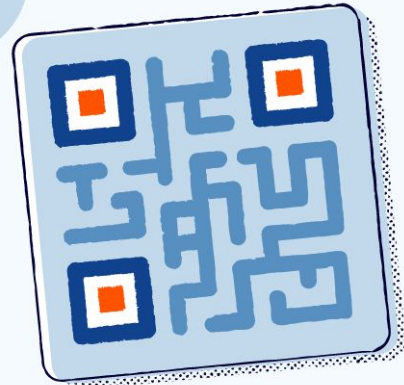


# **Bitly QR Code Index H1 2022**



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**For many years, QR Codes were seen simply as a way for companies to share information in a contactless way. Then came the pandemic and with it, the accelerated digitization of industries and a significant rise in the adoption of QR Codes. We're now seeing brands and businesses of all sizes building QR Codes into their marketing strategy and creating new ways to interact with customers and audiences - everything from new home listings and doctor appointment check-ins, to wireless access in hotel rooms, and the activation of TV ads and direct mail promotions.**

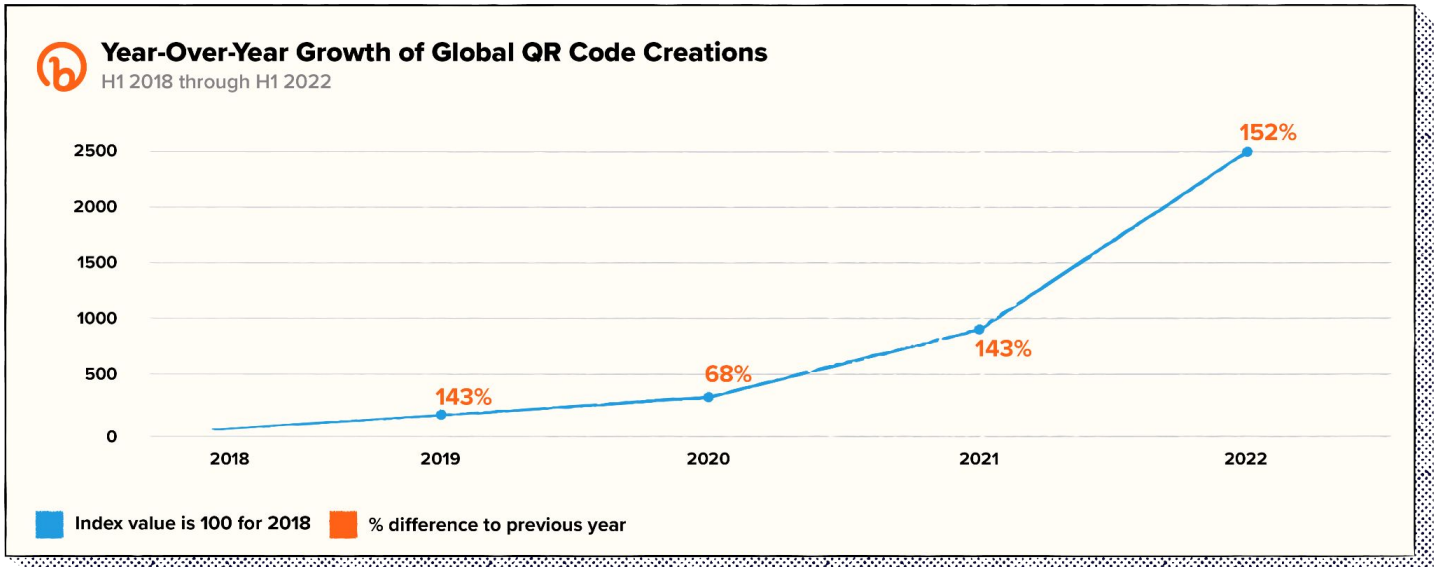
To help marketers, influencers, and businesses of all types navigate the QR Code landscape, we created the **Bitly QR Code Index**, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of data that identifies relations between country, industry, and customer engagement on [QR Code Generator](#), the newest family member of Bitly. It has enabled us to uncover key trends and behaviors driving QR Code creation and use cases during the first two quarters of 2022.

As you consider your strategy for the rapidly-evolving QR Code landscape, here are some key insights to help you understand the developments coming down the line so you can successfully build them into your marketing activities.

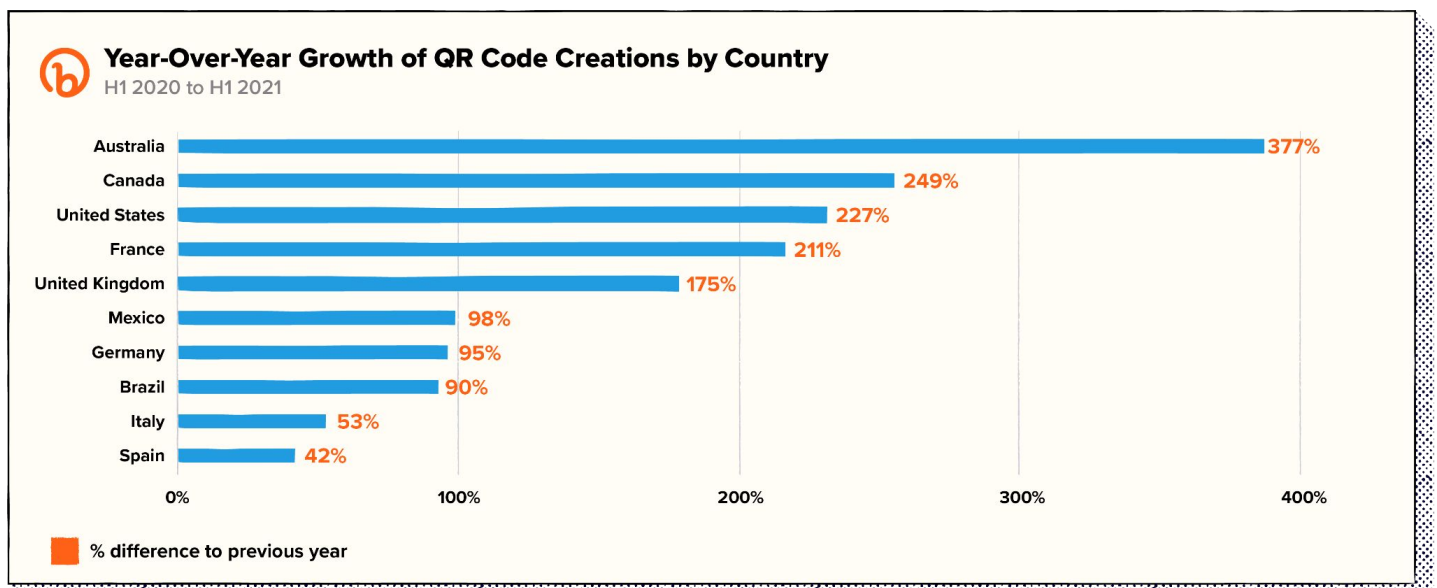
# Trend #1

## QR Codes are continuing to grow and brands and businesses need to take them seriously.

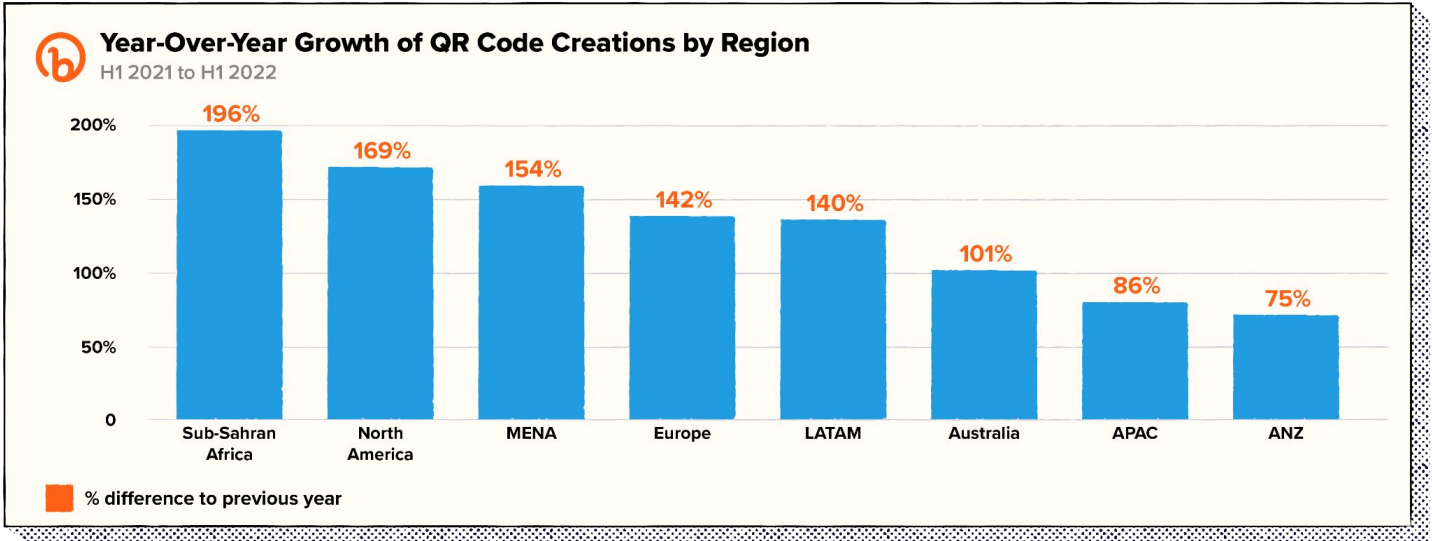
The desire to deliver more robust and consistent customer experiences between the physical world and the mobile, online world has brands and businesses looking increasingly at the value of QR Codes. **In the first half of 2022 we saw a whopping 152% growth in QR Code creations** compared to the same period one year ago. While the pandemic may have accelerated the use of QR Codes between 2020 and 2021, post-pandemic shows no signs of slowing.



Such significant growth in adoption prompted us to ask, “Where is it coming from?” When we break it down by country, we see the acceleration of QR Code creations from 2020 to 2021 being driven primarily by **Australia, Canada, the United States and parts of EMEA**, with the majority showing year-over-year growth of 90% or greater.

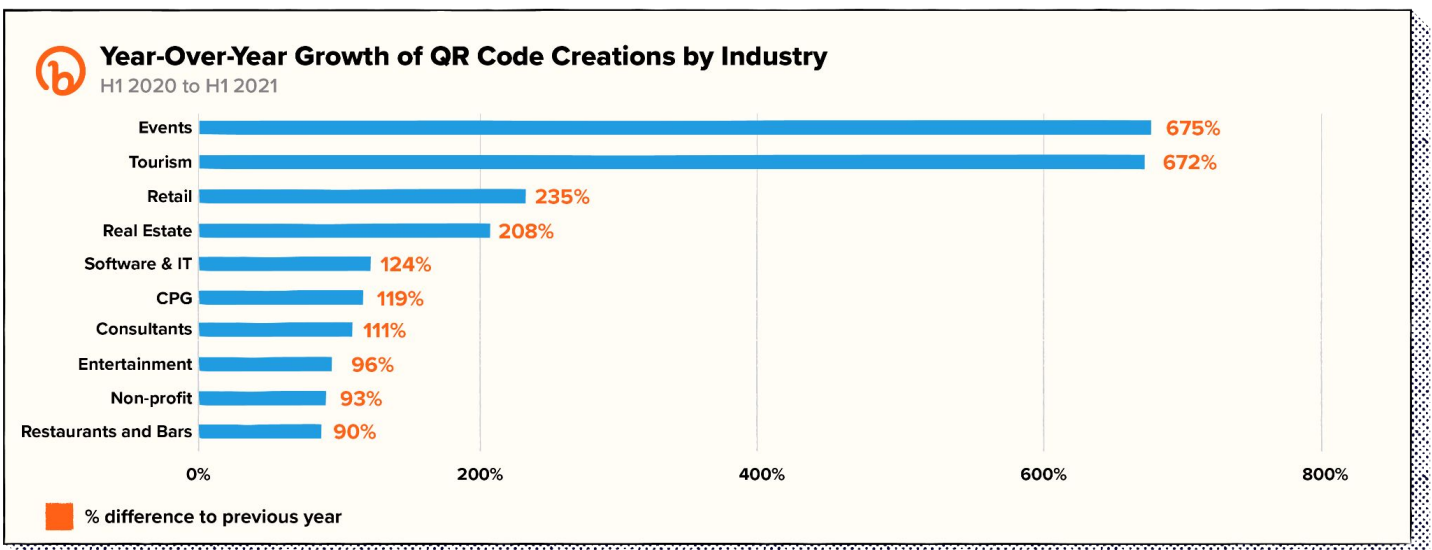


While adoption in these individual countries remains steady, when we look at the macro view, we see a broader global trend with new regions catching up quickly. In the first half of 2022, we see new growth leaders like **Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** emerge, as well as new contenders like **Latin America (LATAM) and Asia Pacific (APAC)**, as the adoption momentum of QR Code continues in these regions.

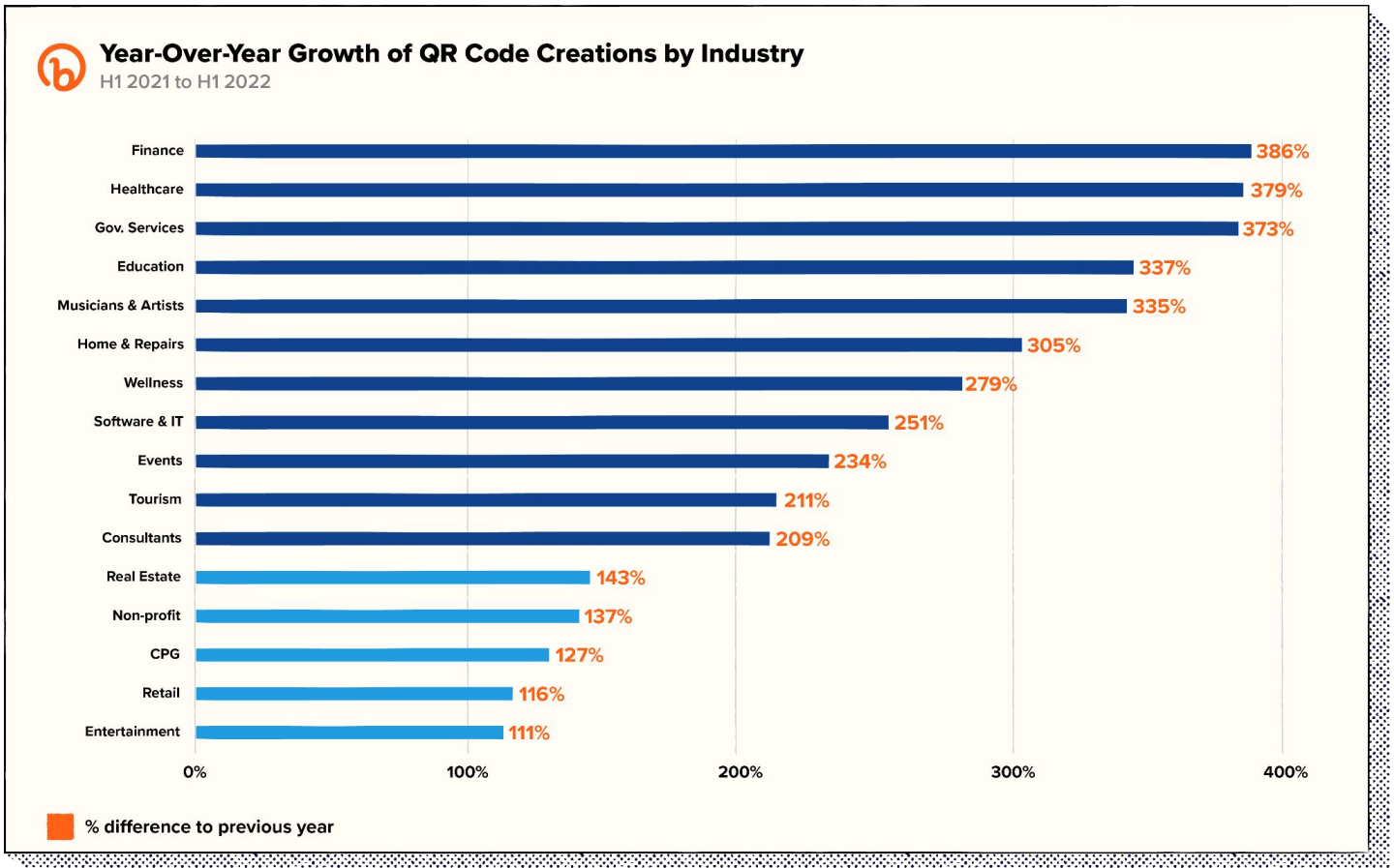


The same trend holds true for the widening of adoption across industries.

In the first quarter of 2020, the COVID-19 lockdown forced the closure of many tourist attractions and events worldwide. It prompted cities and venues to come up with new ways to ensure visitors felt reassured when they returned. Instead of eliminating or removing visitor touchpoints, businesses like [Downtown CityMaps](#), a provider of European tourist information publications, got innovative. By using QR Codes to digitize their publications, as well as add interactive, multimedia content such as direct booking links and video feeds, they positioned their publications as a world-leading online publishing platform, enabling content to be accessed via mobile in a zero-touch, COVID-19-proof way. By the middle of 2021 as restrictions began lifting, the use of QR Codes in the **Events and Tourism industries was booming with more than 600% year-over-year growth**. Following on the heels of these industries were Retail and Real Estate with their own impressive growth of over 200% from 2020 to 2021.



Fast forward one year, and the number of industries with **growth greater than 200%** has nearly tripled to include major sectors like **Finance, Healthcare, Government Services, Education, and Music & Art Influencers.**



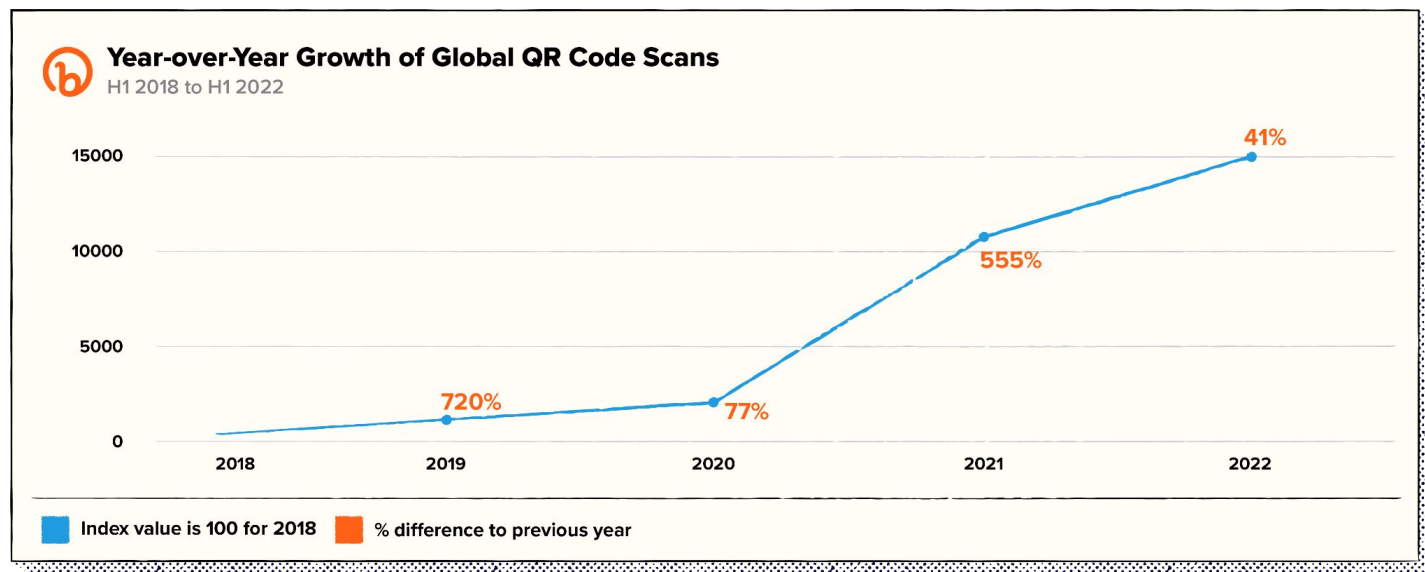
**If the last two years are any indication, QR Codes are well on their way to becoming pervasive across global markets and in all industries.**

## Trend #2

**Digital content sharing is experiencing a shift from company-initiated to user-initiated.**

More doesn't always mean better. In today's digital world, more content has led to information overload. While once being exchanged primarily through social media and email, digital content sharing is now being fueled by platforms like Slack, Google Drive, Zoom, SMS, cloud storage services and internal wikis. This saturation has made customers and audiences more selective about what content they will engage with and the value that comes from such interaction. Engagement with a QR Code however, promises something different: the assurance from a brand that in exchange for scanning, audiences will get something meaningful and personalized.

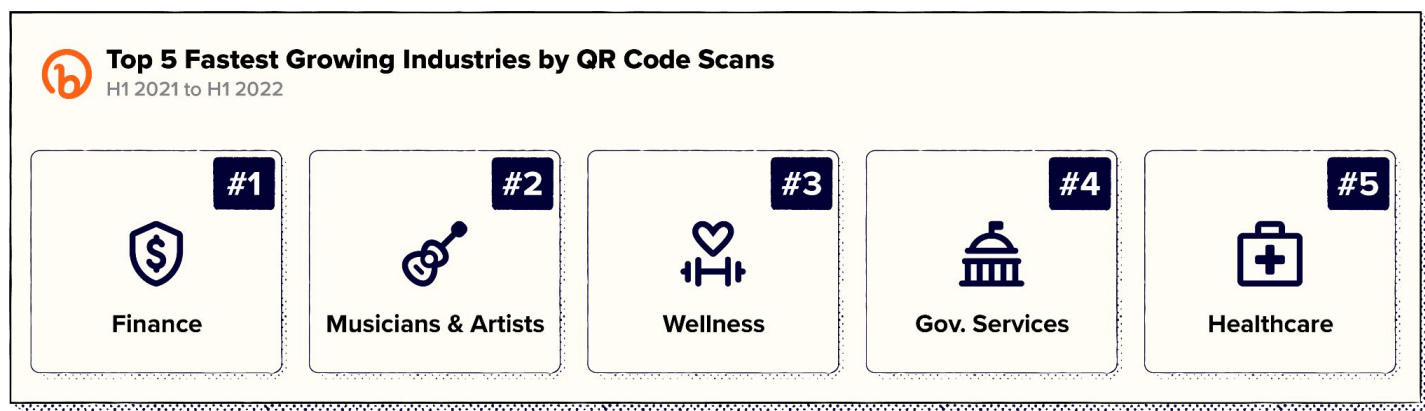
It's this enticement of an interactive, often multimedia, experience that has **global customers scanning QR Codes at a steady increase since 2019**. With the acceleration of COVID-19 in 2020, we see that in the first half of 2021 brands and businesses not only created more QR Codes, but **customers generated 555% more scans** compared to the same period the previous year. Even in the first half of 2022 with its political and economical turbulences, people are scanning QR Codes more than 40% compared to the first half of last year.



## Trend #3

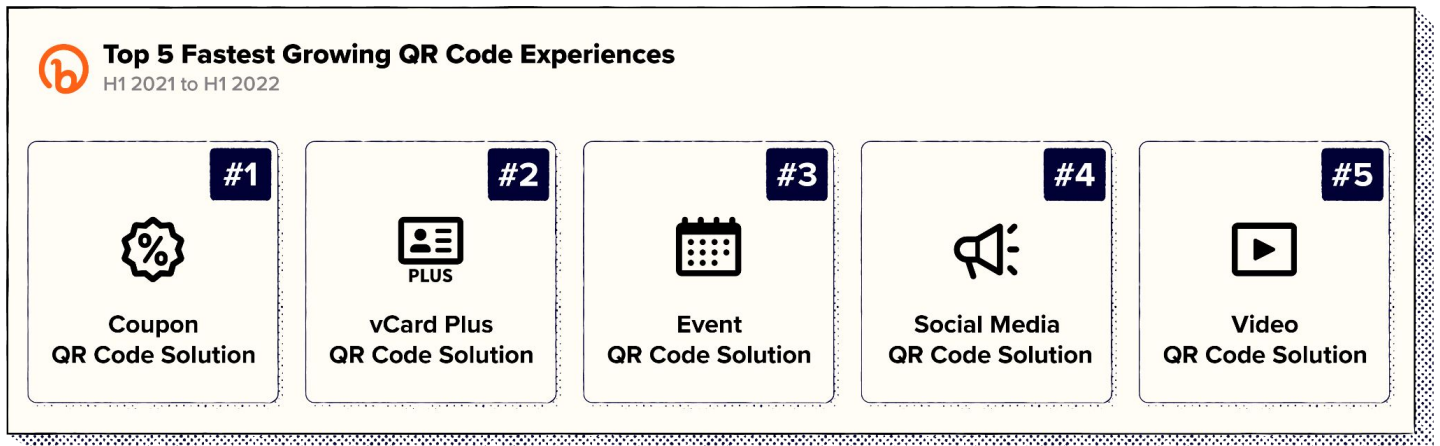
**QR Code experiences are evolving quickly, as early-adopters diversify and innovate.**

So where exactly are consumers scanning? According to our data, brands and businesses in the **Finance, Music & Arts, Wellness, Government Services and Healthcare** industries are reaping the biggest benefits and the highest engagement from QR Code usage, as consumers recognize that scanning a QR Code delivers more than just a way to view the daily specials on a restaurant menu.





Along with this scanning frenzy, we're seeing a rise in the creativity in the type of experiences customers and audiences are being treated to and the value that they're getting. Scanning to a single website remains a consistent path for brands wanting to bridge offline activations to more online information. However in 2022, we're seeing **brands and businesses investing in a broader range of engagement experiences** as a way of making their marketing campaigns more innovative, interactive and unique. Top experiences include virtual business cards to help grow their network, event promotion to help capture a wider audience, and video that integrates product placement and drives cross-promotion.



As QR Code usage has risen, so has creativity, as brands and businesses of all sizes are recognizing the opportunity to turn products and services into interactive experiences their customers want to engage with. To help marketers, influencers, and businesses create deeper connections, we've compiled examples on the following pages of new and innovative ways QR Codes are being used to take marketing and communications to the next level.



# How QR Codes are reshaping creative advertising

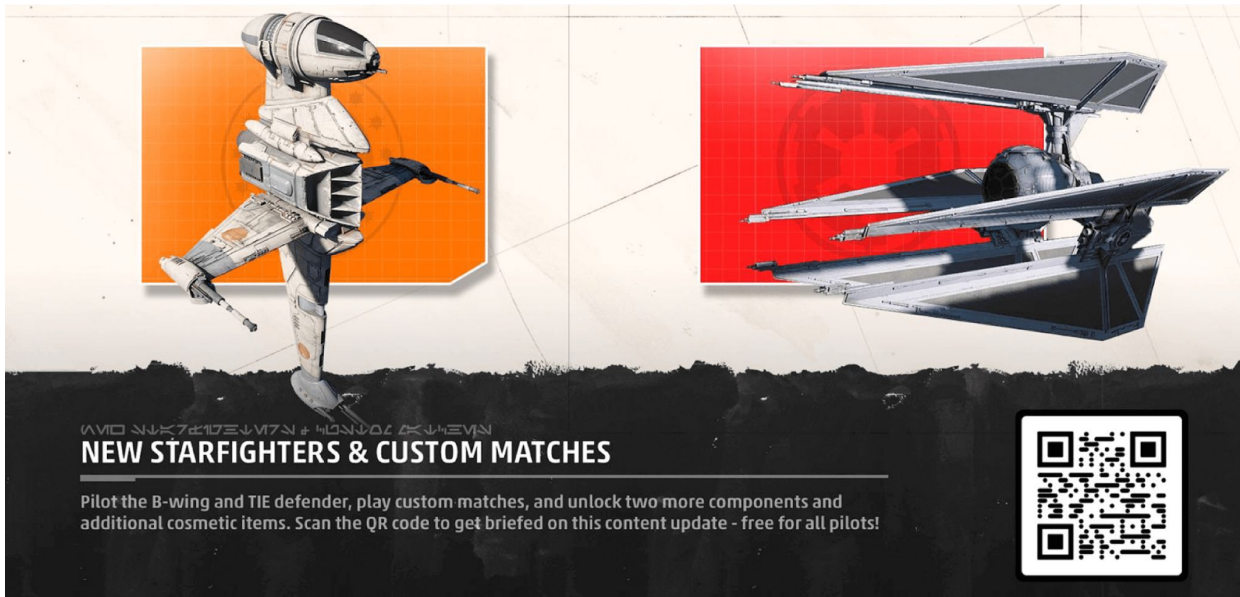




MOTIVE

## Motive Studios EA

Motive Studios EA wanted to implement an update announcement tool in-game for their PC and console game, **STAR WARS™: Squadrons**, that would conveniently inform players without interrupting the game play. Ideally, this tool would redirect players to view more detailed information without requiring them to pause and exit mid-game in order to access any notification. They found QR Codes to be the perfect solution.



*\*Example is not currently active*

They were able to leverage a QR Codes so as not to negatively impact the players' in-game experience. For every new update within the game, the QR Code was shown on an interstitial, which players could access using a mobile device. By scanning the Code, they were redirected to a dedicated mobile-optimized page to view more detailed information about what features had changed without having to stop playing.

In addition, the QR Code provided them with the chance to give more fun facts and information about in-game items. For example, below the depiction of new starfighters and custom matches, a QR Code, once scanned, led players to a webpage to learn more about the illustrated items.

*"Easy-to-Use Solutions For Seamless, In-Game Information Sharing."* [QR Code Generator](#)



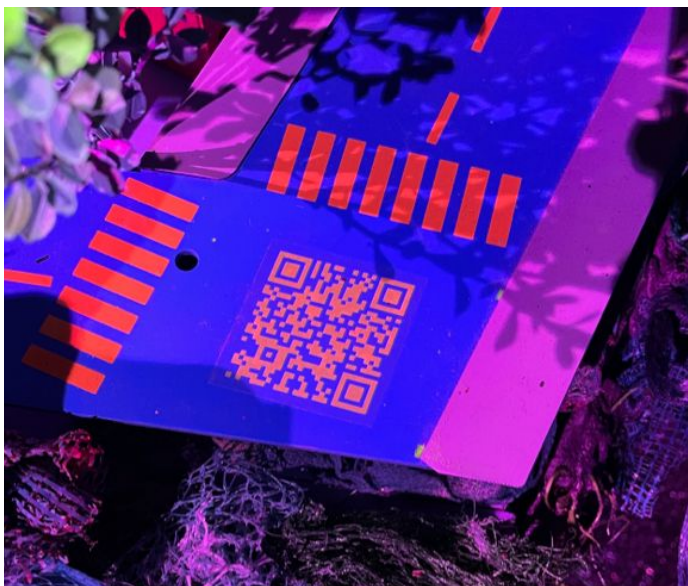
As guests marveled at the detailed miniature worlds before them, they would uncover these cleverly hidden Bitly QR Codes.

Simply scanning the QR Codes would lead Travelers to a website unlocking the stories of these islands through an array of “Psychic Artifacts”: a “Zoning Manual” for an absurdist city governed by “art laws”; a playful “Coming of Orb Tale” exploring the importance of individual expression within an aesthetic utopia; a “Trash Consumption Log” for a recycling bot on the verge of an artistic existential awakening; and an “SOS Message from an infamous Meow Wolf character” marooned in the wilds of an unknown realm.

## Meow Wolf

**Meow Wolf, a US-based arts and entertainment company, opened a mysterious pop-up immersive experience at SXSW 2022, creatively directed by Sandra Wang and produced by Jax Delaney.**

The experience took travelers on a mind-opening exploration of the creative process. Travelers were invited to voyage deep into a mysterious place called the Stream: a psychic channel between worlds where lost ideas resonate off one another, coalesce, and bloom into islands of manifested possibility. Each of these islands held a unique Sci-Fi story exploring the creative process. Each of these stories were accessed via Bitly QR Codes that were artistically integrated into the island itself.



Travelers had a lot of fun engaging with the islands, and uncovering their stories. **Over 12,000 Psychic Artifacts were unlocked during the four day activation.** This journey into the Stream was an inspiring trip into the collaborative subconscious of Meow Wolf’s artists, and Bitly QR Codes allowed travelers a quick and fun way of diving deep into our storyworld.

*“Meow Wolf Transports You To An Immersive Experience With QR Codes.” [Bitly.com](https://bitly.com)*



## Marriott International

**COVID-19 took a toll on the hospitality industry with stricter lockdowns and travel restrictions. But from the first warning signs, Marriott International took several steps to adapt and strengthen its business despite the tightening regulations.**

The shift provided them with a unique opportunity to innovate outdated processes established over five years ago and think of new ways they could do business.

Once Marriott International started implementing QR Codes, they saw immediate benefits that went beyond abiding by COVID-19 regulations.

**It provided them with the ability to create a better brand-building process and innovative ways to streamline information sharing and how they trained their hotel operation teams.**

Instead of handing out print materials, QR Codes allowed them to create a singular digital touchpoint for personnel to access performance evaluations or menus.

This meant a stark reduction of high-touch surfaces, as individuals could access information on their own mobile devices in a contactless, COVID-19-friendly way.

*“Brand Building And Innovative Training For Hotel Operation Teams.” [QR Code Generator](#)*



*\*Example is not currently active*







## Marvel Studios

When Marvel Studios debuted its series “Moon Knight” on Disney+ on March 30, 2022, viewers were treated to a series of semi-conspicuous QR Codes in the background of scenes in the first, second and fifth episodes of the show.

According Adam B. Vary from [Variety](#), “Scanning the QR Codes sends viewers to a special website that contains a weekly free web comic featuring the Moon Knight character through the run of the show, from his first appearance in 1975 through his most recent issue in 2019.

For Marvel Studios, it’s a savvy way to expand viewers’ comic book knowledge for a character even serious Marvel fans may never have read, and it’s been wildly successful: According to Disney, the landing page has been visited over 1.5 million times, **leading to over 500,000 full comics read to date.**”

Vary, Adam B. “How Marvel Studios Buried Secret Messages Via QR Codes Inside ‘Moon Knight.’” [Variety](#), May 5, 2022



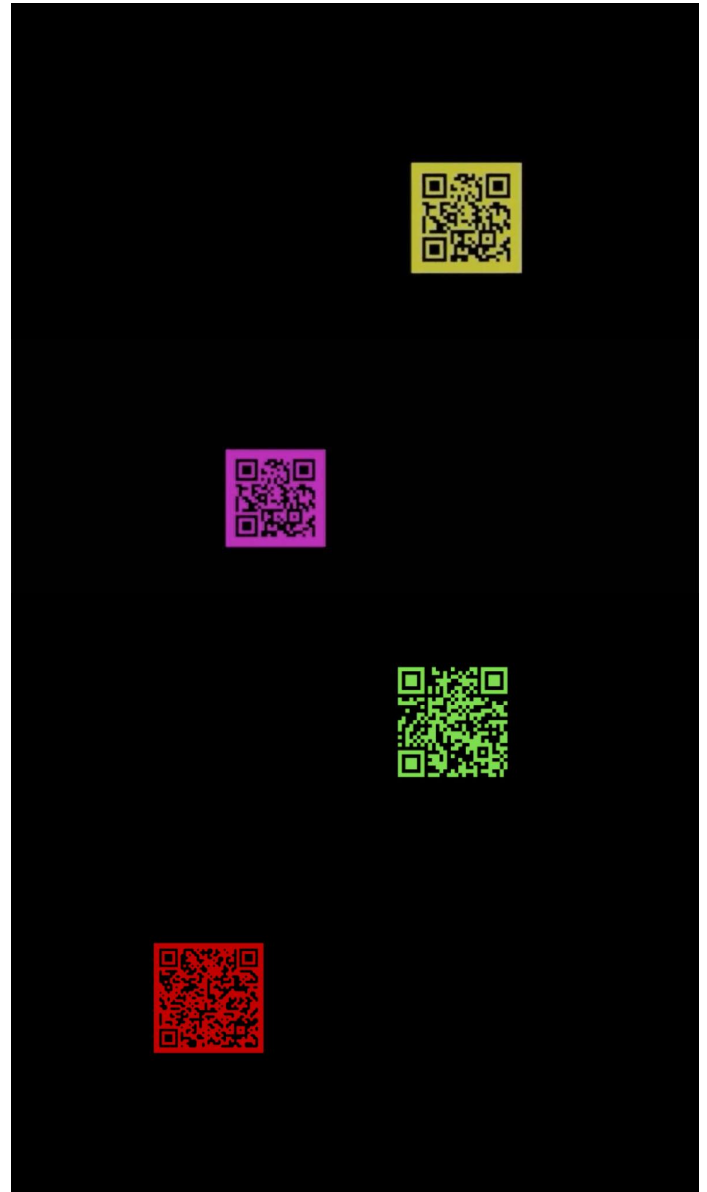
## Coinbase

**If there is one thing we've learned from the 2022 Super Bowl, it's that QR Codes have gone mainstream.**

According to Chaim Gartenberg from [The Verge](#), "Coinbase made its Super Bowl 2022 debut with a remarkable, yet clever QR Code ad that supported the company's 'Less talk, more Bitcoin,' campaign."

The article goes on to say, "The full 60-second ad almost entirely consisted of a colorful bouncing QR Code, reminiscent of the iconic bouncing DVD logo. When scanned, the code brought viewers to Coinbase's promotional website, offering a limited-time promotion of \$15 worth of free Bitcoin to new sign ups, along with a \$3 million giveaway that customers could enter."

Coinbase alone spent \$13 million dollars on its Super Bowl ad — a simple, yet mesmerizing experience that garnered **20 million visitors and boosted its crypto app downloads by 279%.+\***



Gartenberg, Chaim. "Coinbase's Bouncing QR Code Super Bowl Ad Was So Popular It Crashed The App." [The Verge](#), Feb 13, 2022

## Key Takeaways:

QR Codes are well on their way to becoming pervasive across global markets and industries. With usage up 152% from just one year ago, brands and businesses who aren't building QR Codes into their marketing strategy need to look closer at the new ways QR Codes enable them to interact with their audiences.

When it comes to digital content, audiences have become more selective about who and what they will engage with. QR Codes promise something different - an interactive, often multimedia, experience that has global customers scanning QR Codes at a steady year-over-year increase since 2019.

QR Code experiences are evolving *fast*, and so is the creativity and innovation of the brands and businesses deploying them. Early adopters who are increasing their investments in QR Codes are reaping the benefits of deeper customer connections.

Harnessing the power of QR Codes provides a trusted gateway for delivering critical information and experiences to your customers, while helping accelerate past the competition. Additionally, with Bitly's [Link Management](#) and [Link-in-bio](#) solutions, it's simple to create branded links and custom QR Codes and manage all of your customer touchpoints from a single platform. To experience everything these solutions have to offer contact us or visit <https://bitly.com/> to learn more.



## About Bitly

Bitly is a leading global SaaS company offering a comprehensive platform designed to enable every piece of information shared online to connect with key audiences and ignite action. Bitly's all-in-one Connections Platform empowers more than 5.7 million monthly active users and over 420,000 customers globally - people, influencers, brands, and businesses of every size - to use branded links, custom QR Codes, and Link-in-bio solutions as a trusted platform for engaging their audience and delivering critical notifications, information, and experiences. For more on Bitly, visit <https://bitly.com/>.